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dti

The Vines Official
Fan Club Magazine

big h in the big apple

THE VINES DRUMMER **Hamish Rosser** meets up with DTI in New York

Interview SPECIAL

I meet Hamish at one of his favorite haunts, Niagra in the East Village. The bar was empty but it was still quite early. We order some drinks and sit in the back of the bar. Hamish wondered if he was allowed to dance. He wasn't sure if the bar had a license for that or, indeed, if there was a State law against a dancing Vine. Maybe next time. Hamish hands me some Vision Valley promo stickers. I said "Thanks but I have a ton." Capitol Records had been generous and already sent me a roll of eight thousand. Little by little the bar starts to fill up. Apparently it had been rented for a private party. The crowd was becoming quite rowdy and naked but Hamish and I carry on with the interview. I show Hamish a photo of us taken back in 2003.

Hamish Rosser: Ooh, that's with The Music. That's Adam Nutter in the background. That's at Roseland.

A week before meeting, Hamish had a birthday. We created a thread on the DTI forum for all fans to wish Hamish a Happy Birthday. Hamish loves it. He reads a few out loud.

Hamish: "You've inspired me with my own drumming" (by ASH). "Bring back the 'stache! (by Tyler)." (laughs)

Dreamin the Insane: Do you remember the whole Mullet Campaign?

Hamish: I had a mullet there for a while. I guess I satisfied those people.

Hamish notices the post where fan Andie asked the band to come to Brazil.

Hamish: Someone's asked me to come to Brazil. I'd like to go as well. I've never been to Brazil. We'll have to do a South American tour then. Who knows?

DTI: So Hamish, how's your knee healing up?

Hamish: It's good. I messed it up a couple of weeks ago in New York. I tried to jump but it swelled up for a week. It's getting better. I was slapping up those (Vision Valley album promo) stickers around town. (jokingly) I tried to put them high up on a building side and nearly busted my knee again.

DTI: So you were recently upstate? Did you have a good time? What did you do?

Hamish: It was sort detox. I went bike riding. I went to Mohawk. Not really detox but you know…to get a break. I have a girlfriend in New York so that's why I come over here. Her family lives upstate so I got to meet them.

DTI: Is that the girl I met the last time (two years ago at Irving Plaza in NYC during the Aussie Invasion tour)?

Hamish: Probably, yeah.

DTI: So this has been going on for quite a while then.

Hamish: Yeah yeah.

DTI: Good for you! Time to settle down, Hamish?

Hamish: (sarcastically) Me, settle down...yeah. Can you see it?

DTI: Time to bring some little Hamishes into the world?

Hamish: I've got three brothers and they've all got wives and kids now.

DTI: So are your parents bugging you to settle down and start a family?

Hamish: No the pressure's off because my mother's now got six of her own grandchildren, so the pressure's off.

DTI: Are you the youngest?

Hamish: No I'm the third. My little brother's got three kids.

DTI: Wow. So in a way it's good if you ever wanted to be a father, now have a little experience dealing with children, right?

Hamish: Just the good stuff, you know. When they start crying I give them back to their mum or dad. I haven't wiped their arses yet.

DTI: I know you've said you really like New York City, obviously now we know why, but what else do you like about it?

Hamish: I've always liked New York. I came here for the first time in 2000, I think. I really like this part that we're in right now, the East Village. Williamsburg (Brooklyn) is kinda cool. There's lots of really good bars. There's always good gigs on, not that I've caught any this time around. Whatever your entertainment is, it's here in New York.

DTI: Have you ever traveled via subway?

Hamish: Yeah, I was on the subway today.

DTI: Was that the first time?

Hamish: No, I do it all the time. I got a little messed up today. I nearly got on the wrong train at 34th Street. I was coming here and I nearly went uptown instead of downtown.

DTI: What did you do for your birthday?

Hamish: Not a lot. I went to eat Mexican food. There's not many good Mexican restaurants in Sydney. It's just something we don't have much of back home. I like Mexican food.

DTI: That's another good thing about New York City. You can find any ethnic dish here.

Hamish: Yeah totally. The city is big on Asian food. Thai food is really good and Vietnamese. So I took it easy for my birthday but I was drinking for about a week solid before then. I was out every night for a week when I got here. I needed to take it easy for a little while.

DTI: How's it going with Bigphallica?

Hamish: It's going pretty good. They did a couple of gigs while I was over here so they had to sub somebody else in for those but yeah, that's always a good laugh.

DTI: Hemi-Roid? Is that name just for you or for anyone that sits in on that spot?

Hamish: Everyone gets their own unique handle.

DTI: Why Hemi-Roid?

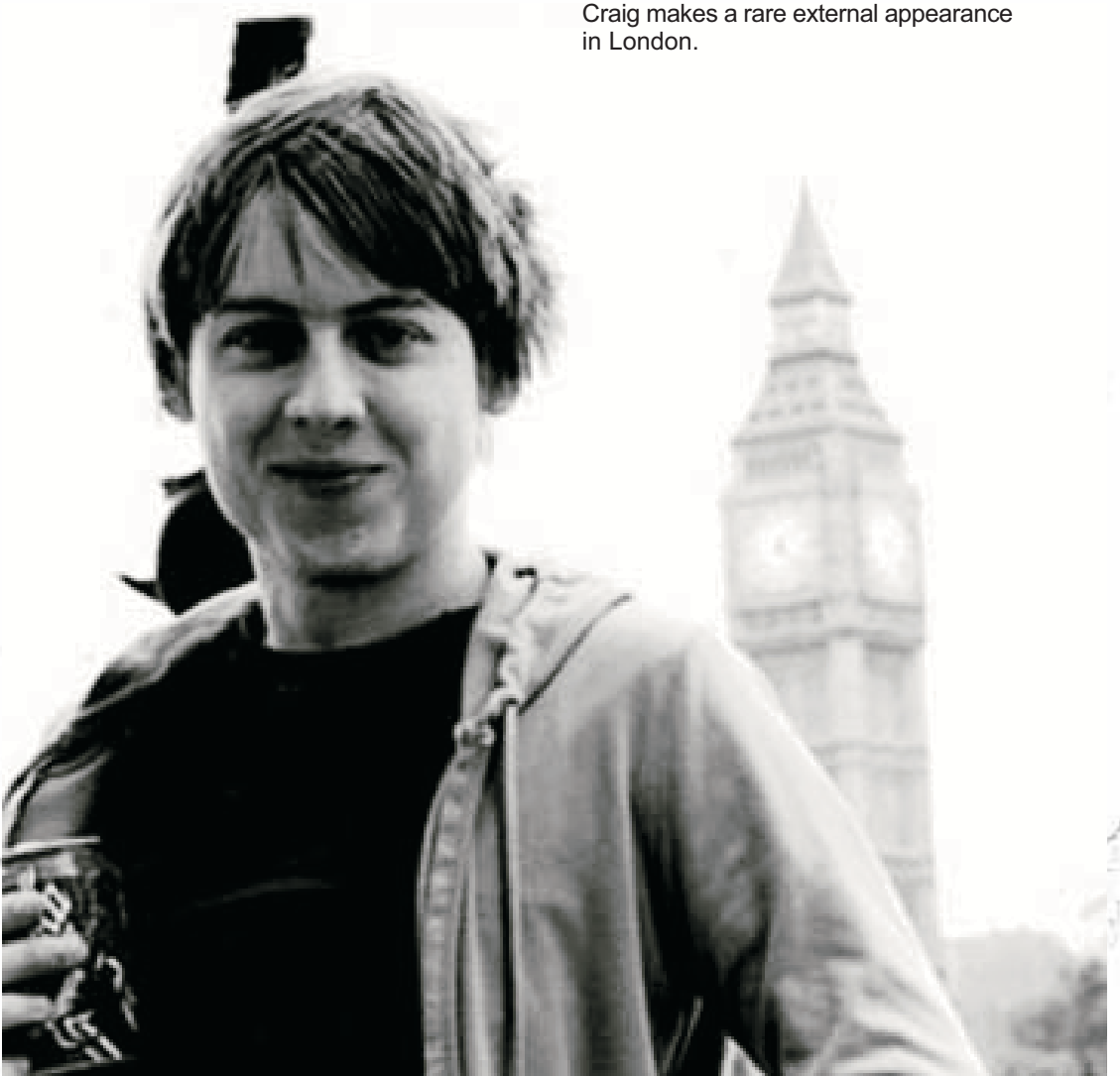
Hamish: Those are my initials, HR.

DTI: You have Bigphallica but what are Craig and Ryan doing when they're not doing anything Vines-related?

Hamish: Ryan breeds his reptiles. He often goes up the coast. He goes diving a bit, as well.

DTI: And how is Ryan healing up? Didn't he have a scuffle with his dog?

Hamish: It wasn't his dog, it was someone else's. It was a huge dog and it was called Jet (laughs) but he's alright. His knee sort of dislocated, it popped out but back in again. It sort of fixed itself really. He was hobbling for a week. It swelled up and he had a walking stick but he's alright.



Craig makes a rare external appearance in London.

DTI: And Craig?

Hamish: Craig keeps a pretty low profile. He doesn't go out much. We did have him out the other night for the first time in a long time. We did those TV shows…

DTI: Yes, I saw the band perform "Don't Listen To The Radio" on the Channel [V] website.

Hamish: Live version? Oh, I haven't seen it yet. Is it good?

DTI: Yeah. It was great to see the band perform again.

Hamish: That's the first gig we've done in two years so we're a bit rusty. Then we went out all night and Craig was with us till about four in the morning.

DTI: Wow! That's unlike him, isn't it?

Hamish: It is which is good!

DTI: He was in a good mood then?

Hamish: Yeah. It was pretty good on the whole.

DTI: It looks like Ryan has abandoned his striped jumper for a new Goth look. Is he going through a phase of sorts?

Hamish: I don't know if it's Goth as much as it would be The Warlocks or Brian Jones Town but I don't think you've seen the last of the stripes, so don't worry. I thought he was copping heat for wearing it too much. I think he retired it because he needed a change.

DTI: The band has been hinting about possible gigs. Any confirmed show dates yet?

Hamish: Not anything confirmed…nothing nailed down. Maybe some festivals, maybe a gig in New York but until it gets nailed down, I don't want to speculate too much.

DTI: But isn't the band playing some Sydney gigs at least?

Hamish: We'll certainly play in Australia. I'm thinking there's a good chance we'll get a gig in New York.
First we'll have to get a new bass player. Andy Kent was filling in but he's got his own band, You Am I, he's the manager of that. He's got a day job with a company called Love Police. He works on the record label side of that business, and he's got a one year old…he's got a wife and a kid.

DTI: So he's got a full plate!

Andy kent struggles to grasp the concept of being cool in a photo.

Hamish: Exactly so he can't be our full-time guy.

DTI: So how is that going to work, looking for a new bass player? Will they put out an ad in the paper?

Hamish: We're probably not going to put an ad in the paper. I've got a guy that I really like for the job so hopefully we'll find somebody. I'd rather not do a cold call, a cattle call (laughs). It's a matter of being able to play the songs, but more than that, it's finding someone we really like and who fits the band, which is harder than finding someone who can play.

DTI: Capitol seems to have taken an unusual stance of supporting the band without much concern for the lack of touring. Why do you think they have a soft spot for The Vines?

Hamish: When Andy Slater became president of Capitol, we were one of his first big signings. They've also invested a lot of money into us that they haven't really seen returned (laughs) in terms of promoting us and touring us so from a business point of view they'd like a bit of a return on their investment (laughs). They haven't given us the massive press we've had previously but we got the album out, which is good. I think they still like us after all we've put them through (laughs).

DTI: If the band were only allowed to play one gig this year in the world, be it a festival or a venue, which one would you personally choose?

Hamish: If it's one show, a festival would be good. I'd like to do Big Day Out again. Reading would be good or Glastonbury or Lollapalooza.

DTI: Would you like it to take place in Australia?

Hamish: Not necessarily. Probably in the U.K. We've always had the best response from the audience in England and Scotland. Maybe European so Reading (in England) or Roskilde, actually. Yeah that's one I've always wanted to do. Roskilde in Denmark. Yes, that's the answer! We finally arrived at it (laughs).

"They've also invested a lot of money into us that they haven't really seen returned"

Hamish joking on Capitol's loyalty to The Vines despite all the recent problems.

DTI: One of the advantages of not doing major tours is that you can concentrate much more on writing and recording. Have any songs post-Vision Valley been composed yet?

Hamish: There's a few other tracks floating around but the best ones are on the album already. I know Ryan is sitting on a bunch of songs though. Craig has got a few up his sleeve. You would have heard all the old demos, I'm sure, but there's a few others that you haven't heard. I think Ryan has got the biggest stock of songs at the moment. He's a bit of a dark horse.

DTI: You think he would ever consider doing something solo if these songs never make it on a Vines album?

Hamish: That's a possibility. He really wants to put them down and figure out what to do with them.

DTI: So do these Ryan tracks sound more like The Vines sound or are they his own style?

Hamish: They're different. They're Ryan's own style. If you get the chance to hear these songs, you'll recognize straight away that he loves The Dandy Warhols, Brian Jones Town and BRMC. That's where he's coming from.

DTI: On your own down time, do you ever browse the Vines forums? What is your impression of them?

Hamish: (laughs) I occasionally

Wayne Connelly and Craig Nicholls

browse The Vines forums but I never put posts up on them. It can be a bit weird sometimes because I feel like I'm eavesdropping in on a conversation that I shouldn't be listening to. I only check out the DTI forum and before that I used to go on the-vines.net.

DTI: Are you sure you don't post?

Hamish: Never (laughs). But I do read it occasionally.

DTI: Given this extra time that the band have on their hands, would you ever consider releasing singles or EPs of unreleased tracks?

Hamish: Yeah I think that's a really good idea. I just bought an old Living Colour EP and it's exactly that. It's two unreleased tracks, two covers and two live tracks. It's a really cool EP so I'd consider doing something like that.

DTI: What about releasing a brand new song via the Internet to create a buzz?

Hamish: We did put "Gross Out" on the net for free initially to remind people that we were coming back. Then there was another first with the video for "Anysound." It was put out on YouTube as a free download. The Internet is fast becoming more important than radio…it probably already is for getting new bands heard which is great.

DTI: That was a great video for Anysound. The puppets got your mannerisms down but they certainly didn't do you guys justice in the looks department.

Hamish: (laughs) We are Team America, after all.

DTI: Tell us more about that meeting between Craig and Patrick at the studio. Was it more like a family reunion or Jerry Springer?

Hamish: (laughs) No, more like a family reunion. We were at one of the many studios that we used and Patrick was back from a trip overseas with Youth Group. I called him or he called me. He wanted to come to the studio so I said, "Yeah come on down." When he came down I was worried, I thought it was going to be like Jerry Springer but it was quite the reverse. Him and Craig got on like old friends which was really cool to see.

I've got no hard feelings towards Patrick for quitting the band. I wish he hadn't quit. I wish he was still playing with us but I don't hate him for leaving. He's a great bass player. He comes up with his own unique bass lines with every song he does. I was really reminded of that when we were rehearsing with Andy Kent and we were doing "Ride." The bass playing in Ride is really good. The bass lines are killer in that song. So yeah, he is missed.

DTI: Maybe one day Patrick can rejoin the band.

Hamish: Never say never.

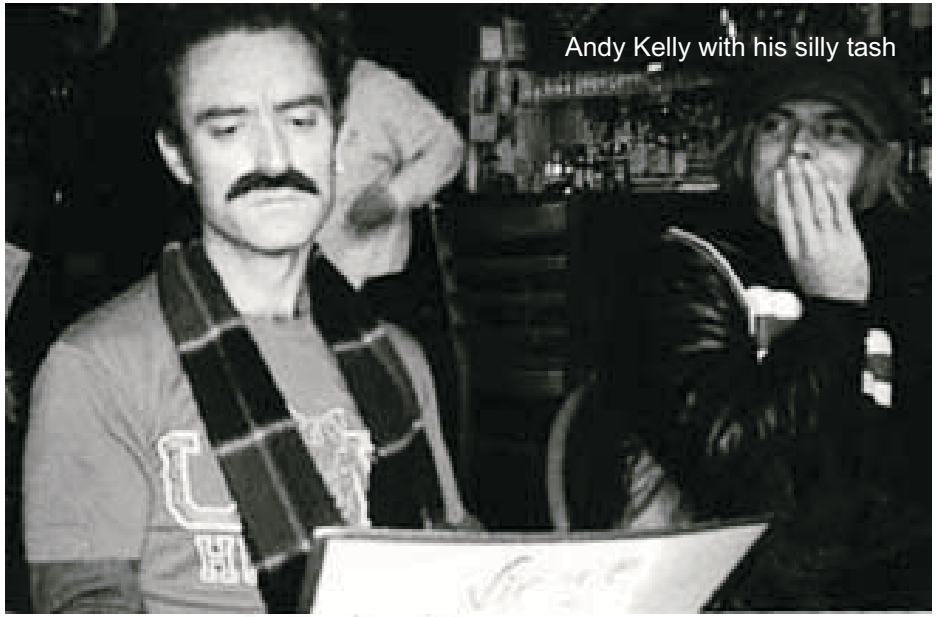
DTI: What Jim Carrey films did you watch while recording Vision Valley?

Hamish: Probably more during the demo-ing process. We watched Dumb and Dumber, Me, Myself & Irene, Ace Ventura one and two and Bruce Almighty (laughs).

DTI: Is that a pic of Andy Kent on the inner sleeve of the CD?

Hamish: Yeah there is a picture of him in there. There's also a picture of Wayne (Connolly) in there and there's a picture of Andy Kelly, our manager.

I pull out the CD and Hamish begins


Andy Kelly with his silly tash

pointing certain photos out.

DTI: Oh yeah that's pretty funny, Andy with that moustache.

Hamish: That's hilarious. You can see Ryan cracking up in the background.

DTI: And Andy looks so serious too.

Hamish: Andy is one of the funniest men in the world. That photo was taken in New York.

DTI: That was taken at Virgil's (Barbeque restaurant), right?

Hamish: Maybe.

DTI: Yeah that's at Times Square.

Hamish: We did an MTV interview. I think it's on Second Avenue.

Hamish was mistaken because the photo was taken when they did an interview with Blender magazine around Times Square. The band went to Virgil's for dinner and if you look closely at the photo of Andy Kelly on the CD sleeve, you'll see the name Virgil's on the top of the menu he's looking at.

DTI: Ooh look at this photo (pointing to the photo of Craig with Big Ben in the background). He looks like a baby.

Hamish: Yeah I took most of these photos. I took that one and this one (points to the photo of the large angel).

DTI: Where was that taken?

Hamish: In England. I think it's near Newcastle. It's called The Angel of The North.

DTI: Who's standing there?

Hamish: That's Craig and he's flipping it off (laughs). It doesn't quite come across on a postage sized picture but yeah, it's funny.

Hamish points to a photo of him and Ryan holding a can of beer.

Hamish: That's in Japan. We've got kimonos on (laughs).

DTI: That's great. You guys need to put out more photos.

Hamish: I've got tons but all the best ones are here (laughs).

DTI: Everyone loves this one (I point to the band in animal costumes, taken at the KROQ Almost Acoustic Christmas concert in December 2002).

Hamish: That's with the Flaming Lips. It was in L.A. at the Universal Amphitheater. That was the night before Jay Leno (devilish laugh). The Flaming Lips were playing and they asked, "You guys wanna dress up in these suits?" and of course we said, "Yeah." I think they do it every night. They had about thirty animal suits with them and I imagine they get friends, crew, bands, whoever, just to fill the suits.

DTI: That's so cool.

Hamish: (laughs) Of course it is!

DTI: So you were in it too?

Hamish: Yeah I was in one of those suits as well?

DTI: Which one were you in?

Hamish: I might be in one of these (points to the pic). I can't remember which suit I was wearing but they had all these lights and they gave us confetti and I was throwing confetti at Beck. Then the drummer (Steven Drozd) said, "Look, I want you guys to trash my drum kit because I hate it and it's the last gig of the tour." So I said, "What makes you think we have any experience?" (laughs)

DTI: Craig does! So does he trash the drum kit on the Channel V performance?

Hamish: Yeah.

DTI: Great! Everyone misses that.

Hamish: (cracks up laughing) We have to give props to The Who for inventing gear trashing.

DTI: Andy Kent has been in the business for years. Has the band learned a lot from him?

Hamish: Not a lot (laughs).

DTI: Is he more like Yoda or Mr. Miyagi?

Hamish: (laughs) He certainly brings a good level of professionalism and musicianship and everything else and he's a funny guy. He's fun to be around so with this album, he was there to play bass. He wasn't managing us.

DTI: Did he offer any advice?

Hamish: Not unless we were asking for it. He was more like a friend who was there to help out. Him and Wayne have known each other for a longtime as well.

DTI: Craig originally played bass on the Vision Valley demos. How good was he?

Hamish: Yeah he did but he's better as a guitar player, I think (laughs).

DTI: We thought he as ready to start his own one-man-band.

Hamish: Yeah, do a Ryan Adams and switch to bass and lead vocal.

DTI: Does Craig play drums as well?

Hamish: He's quite a good drummer actually.

DTI: Maybe you two can switch one day. He can play drums and you can sing lead vocals.

Hamish: (laughs) Yeah, fulfill my Dave Grohl fantasies (laughs).

DTI: Phil Collins did it as well.

Hamish: Yeah Phil. He should have stayed behind the kit though (laughs).

DTI: Will The Vines ever play 1969 again?

Hamish: Yeah I hope so. It has been awhile. When we were rehearsing we ran through quite a few of the old songs we haven't played.

DTI: Yeah because in the Channel V show, you guys performed Ms. Jackson.

> **"He's quite a good drummer actually"**
> *Hamish on Craig*

Hamish: Yeah that got brought back. I think we're going to put down another b-side cover (song) soon but I don't know of what.

DTI: A song you've never covered before?

Hamish: Yeah, especially in England because they're screaming out for b-sides because we haven't got any that we haven't used already. So we have to come up with some new b-sides.

I questioned manager Andy Kelly about this and he thinks the cover is a Redd Kross song the guys

have been talking about. Possibly "Pretty Please" from Show World but he wasn't certain. He remembers talking to Craig about all the potentially great Redd Kross songs they could do but couldn't remember what Craig actually decided on in the end. Stay tuned for that one.

DTI: What about the demos? Even though they've been released unofficially via the Internet, would the band ever consider releasing them officially on an album?

Hamish: We'd actually like to record them properly, do actual studio versions of them and then release an Insecticide-type album of b-sides, covers, and leftovers. Yeah I'd like to put it out there but the demos are already out there so. But Ryan and I have discussed this, recording them properly and make it into an EP, an album or something.

DTI: Who would you rate as the best drummer in rock and roll?

Hamish: Dave Grohl is one of my heroes.

DTI: Didn't he slag off the band?

Hamish: I forgave him. It's alright. Yeah I read that in a magazine once, but who cares really? They've mouthed off other bands. That's what guys in bands do.

My other favorite drummers are Mike Bordin from Faith No More. He was Ozzy's drummer for awhile and he's amazing. Matt Cameron from Soundgarden and now he's in Pearl Jam, he's wicked. Jimmy Chamberlin from Smashing Pumpkins. He's sort of more like a jazz player playing rock but he's a monster. He's awesome. I love Mitch Mitchell and John Bonham. Eric Kretz from Stone Temple Pilots, I like him. That's a few (laughs)! Oh and Will Calhoun is another one from Living Colour, last one.

Yeah he's wicked.

DTI: What are the advantages and disadvantages of being the drummer in the band?

Hamish: (laughs) The worse thing about being a drummer is you have the most gear to carry around.

DTI: You have to carry your own gear?

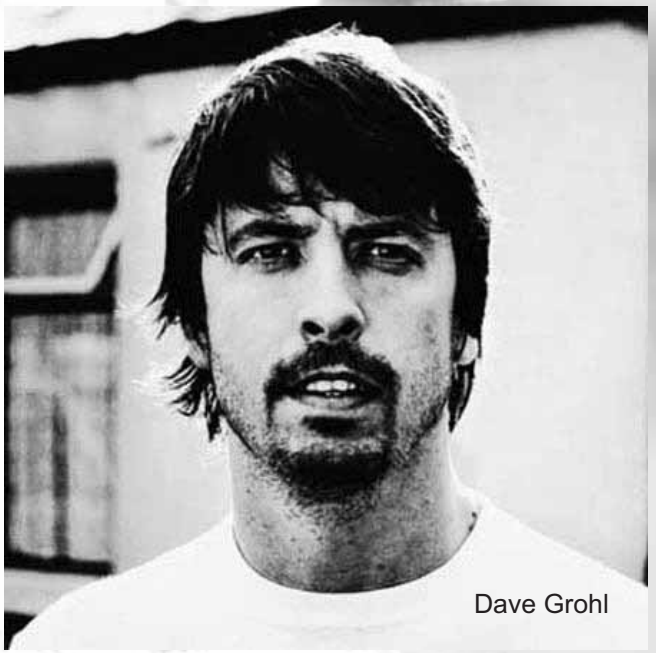
Hamish: Well for rehearsals and stuff, just being a drummer in general, ya know? But the best thing about it is you can sit down on the job (laughs).

DTI: It looks like you have to handle most of the press interviews now. How is that going for you?

Hamish: I don't mind it. I've got a pretty big mouth anyway so I'm okay with it. Ryan is a funny guy but when it comes to there being a tape recorder or a TV camera, he gets a bit shy. His first interview was in L.A. when we were touring with Jet and he was up all night with Jet and they had a breakfast interview with KROQ. So he goes with them to the radio station at eight in the morning (laughs) for a Jet interview and he's there with them without having had any sleep (laughs). I'd love to get a transcript or recording of that!

DTI: Do you want to be famous to the point where you are recognized on the street? Could you be the next Phil Collins?

Hamish: (laughs) Nobody wants that! No that would be really frustrating. Every once in a while somebody would ask, "Hey are



Dave Grohl

Jet: Big Drinkers

you Hamish from the Vines?" and I'd say, "Yeah," but that doesn't happen very often and I'm glad it doesn't. For Craig, people will see him out there and they'll recognize him. It's harder for him because he's shy enough as it is. So no, I wouldn't want to be that famous.

DTI: Do you think Craig would be recognized on these (NYC) streets just walking around?

Hamish: I don't know. Probably not around here but New Yorkers don't really care too much about that kind of stuff anyway. Even if someone does recognize you here, they won't make a big deal out of it. In L.A. they probably would. "Oh my Gawd!!" (screeches)

DTI: Out of all the band members you've met on your travels, who has been the most impressive drinker?

Hamish: I challenge anyone to go out drinking with Jet (laughs).

DTI: What about You Am I? Can they toss them back?

Hamish: Yeah definitely. Especially Tim (Rogers) and Davey (Lane). Yeah Tim is an impressive drinker. He's got an Australian band called Dallas Crane. Any band from Melbourne will keep you up all night.

DTI: What music are you currently into?

Hamish: I recently bought the new Tool album. It's really good. I like the new Pearl Jam album as well. Eddie Vedder is angry again (laughs). I love all that Seattle grunge. I like the Arctic Monkeys. Their album has been out for awhile. It's good. Have you heard End of Fashion?

The rowdy bar crowd began to scream "Woooo!!"

DTI: Maybe they have!

Hamish: She knows End of Fashion! (laughs) Yeah they're an Australian band. They're really good as well. You should check those guys out.

DTI: Any plans to take your TV interviewer career to the next level, up or down?

Hamish: (laughs) I don't think there's much more down from the TV show. I found it easy to do, to speak on camera but I just don't think there's any credibility in being a VJ or TV interviewer. I look at most of the people that do that job and I think they're idiots. And then for me to take that job I sort of had to see myself like them. I don't really want to be the guy on TV, unless I'm really hard up (laughs). I might have to sell out and do TV again.

DTI: Hamish Rosser is a very Celtic name. How Scottish are you?

"Yeah, that was cheeky..I did that!"

Hamish is caught out selling his old drums on internet forum.

Hamish: I don't know if it's Scottish actually. I don't really know much of my family tree. I think it's more English than Scottish. Maybe a bit of Polish. I don't really know. It's all European mostly, I believe.

DTI: On the old Vines forum (the-vines.net), somebody came on the forum to tell us all about an eBay auction for a set of your drums. Was that really you posting on the forum?

Hamish: I did post that one, yeah (laughs). I'd been trying to sell them for weeks. Yeah I put it on eBay. I got a good price for them.

DTI: Busted!!

Hamish: (laughs) Yeah that was cheeky, I did that!

We decide to enjoy the sunny day by taking a stroll through Tompkins Square Park. Hamish reminds me how this park used to be quite infested with drug dealers. I didn't ask how he knew that. Earlier that day there was a religious festival that could be heard throughout the entire neighborhood. The park had come a long way. We talk about everything from Jay Leno, to rents in Manhattan to the old standby weather discussion. Hamish then walked me back to the subway station and with a big H hug, said goodbye and vaporized. It was a nice way to spend a lovely Saturday afternoon.

By Linda Murphy

Listen to an extract from this interview at ***www.dreamintheinsane.com/hamish***